

**ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
LAMOREAUX JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER
COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM – 2nd FLOOR
341 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868
Wednesday June 4, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

AGENDA

- 1) CALL TO ORDER**
- 2) KEY STAKEHOLDERS UPDATES**
- 3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- 4) REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**
- 5) REPORTS FROM INSPECTIONS/REVIEWS**
- 6) REPORTS FROM LIAISON ACTIVITIES & WEBINARS**
- 7) MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 8) COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**
- 9) ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES OF ORANGE COUNTY
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
Wednesday June 4, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Johnson. The meeting was held at the Betty Lou Lamoreaux Juvenile Justice Center, 341 The City Drive, Orange, California, in the second floor Commission Conference Room.

COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT: Denise Churchill
Marcy Garfias
Judy Johnson, Chair
Silvestre Lopez (Teams)
Joel Matson (Teams)
Connie Marshall
Wyatt McClean
Lynda Perring
Ryan Rising (Teams)
Mary Lou Vachet
Steve Winder, Vice Chair
Dolores Yost

COMMISSIONERS

ABSENT: Madelyn Rodriguez
Dorothy Stafford

STAFF: Lii Toelupe, Executive Administrative Assistant
Josue Rogel, Legal Processing Specialist
Emily Sanchez, Legal Processing Specialist

GUEST: Veronica Rodriguez, Chief Deputy Director (Social Service Agency)
Dawn Smith, Assistant Deputy Director of Children and Youth Services (Health Care Agency)
Dr. Katy Ramezani, Director of Educational Program and Services (Orange County Department of Education)
Jessica Johnson, Chief Deputy Probation Officer (Probation)

KEY STAKEHOLDERS UPDATES

A. Social Service Agency

Veronica Rodriguez, Chief Deputy Director, provided a brief introduction. She shared that the department is currently in the process of hiring a new Division Director of Children and Family Services. She announced the upcoming retirement of Mo Sapiga, Deputy Director. She also reported that the current population at Orangewood stands at 92. Lastly, she highlighted several ongoing challenges, including staff assaults, a hiring freeze, and insurance-related issues.

B. Health Care Agency

Dawn Smith, Assistant Deputy Director of Children and Youth Services, reported that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program has been completed and is currently awaiting provider applications. The program will be located at the BeWell Campus in Irvine and will offer 30 beds. She also noted effective July 1, 2025, contracts will transition to a fee-for-service model.

C. Department of Education

Dr. Katy Ramezani, Director of Educational Programs and Services, announced that Narciso Iglesias has been appointed as the new ACCESS for an assistant principal and began his role on June 2, 2025. She also noted that the department has hired a new librarian for Juvenile Hall.

D. Probation

Jessica Johnson, Chief Deputy Probation Officer, reported that the demolition at Juvenile Hall has been completed, and the next phase of construction is set to begin. The upcoming work will include the addition of new Spyder labs, the rebuilding of the school administration office, a new classroom, and a career technical education (CTE) area. She also noted that the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) has funded and designed wellness rooms at the Central Youth Reporting Center (YRC). Lastly, she announced that the Otto Fischer and Rio Contiguo graduation ceremony will take place on June 6, 2025.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The May 21, 2025, revised minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

A. Education

Commissioner Judy Johnson informed the group that a meeting is scheduled for June 26, 2025, with OCDE administrators.

B. Non-Institutional Placements

No updates to report.

C. Law Enforcement Agency

No updates to report.

D. Legislation

No updates to report.

E. Essay and Art Contest

No updates to report.

F. Annual Report

Commissioner Judy Johnson reported that the Executive Administrative Assistant (EAA) Lii is currently working with the county's printing department to have the annual report printed.

G. JJC/ Probation Book Club

Commissioner Winder shared that the youth have been actively engaged in the book club, taking initiative by drafting discussion questions and currently working on a letter to author Dean Koontz, inviting him to speak at an upcoming book club meeting. He also spoke about an activity that he participated in with the youth of the book club that was successful.

H. Substance Use Treatment Programs/Services

No updates to report.

I. Away from Care

No updates to report.

J. Educational/Vocational Programs and Services for Post-Graduate System-Involved Youth

No updates to report.

REPORTS FROM INSPECTIONS/REVIEWS

A. South Coast Children's Society – Caladium

Commissioners Garfias, Matson, and Perring conducted a review of the South Coast Children's Society – Caladium on May 23, 2025. Commissioner Matson reported meeting with the house manager, Ethan, who demonstrated a strong passion for providing the best environment for the youth. Matson noted that the house was clean and well-maintained. No corrective action notice needed.

B. New Alternatives CRF

Commissioners Garfias, Johnson, and Rising conducted a review of New Alternatives CRF on May 27, 2025. Commissioner Garfias noted that the house was clean and well-maintained. She spoke with the acting program director, Diana Pose, who shared that the age range of the youth in the home is 13 to 19 years old. The house employs a chef, and the meals provided are reported to be nutritious and appropriate for the youth. Youth who want to leave the premises temporarily are encouraged by staff to first request a "self-pass." No corrective action notice needed.

REPORTS FROM LIAISON ACTIVITIES & WEBINARS

Court Improvement Committee Dependency

Commissioner Perring reported there are no major updates.

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)

Commissioner Winder provided several updates. He noted that Judge Martinez has been transferred to Civil Court, and Judge Marshack is overseeing Grace Court, which currently has 39 participants. Social Services Agency (SSA) is in the process of updating the caregiver guide and working to reduce "away from care" incidences. Additionally, Commissioner Winder shared that a youth previously identified as CSEC was safely recovered in Los Angeles. Efforts are underway to train healthcare providers to better identify CSEC youth. Information and resources are also being distributed to schools to help staff recognize and respond if they suspect a student may be involved in CSEC. Lastly, he referenced Senate Bill 963, which pertains to reforms and improvements in the care and oversight of foster youth and CSEC-involved individuals.

Juvenile Recovery Court Graduation

Commissioner Perring shared that she enjoyed the Juvenile Recovery Court graduation ceremony conducted by Judge Mittal, noting that the event was well-organized.

Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE)

Commissioner Marshall reported that funding has been secured through June 2027. She noted that in-person classes are being offered on topics such as grief and loss, emotional neglect by parents, and best practices for supporting LGBTQ+ youth. She also shared that Starwell Family and Early Childhood Consultation recently gave a presentation on child behavior and suggested they could be considered as potential JJC meeting guest speaker in the future.

Webinar: Children Behind Bars: The Real Costs of Youth Incarceration

Commissioner Johnson shared that Charlie, a former in-custody youth from Orange County, was one of the speakers and did an excellent job sharing his experience while in custody. During the panel's discussion, obtaining input from youth in custody was emphasized and encouraged.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/WEBINARS/INSPECTIONS

Commissioner Johnson is planning to attend the Child Welfare Council (CWC) Youth Justice Webinar on June 4, 2025.

Commissioner Churchill is planning to attend the Child Welfare System Improvement Plan (CWSIP) monthly meeting on June 5, 2025.

Commissioner Yost is planning to attend the Juvenile Recovery Court (JRC) Graduation on June 5, 2025.

Commissioners Johnson and Vachet are planning to attend the Otto Fischer and Rio Contiguo Graduation on June 6, 2025.

Commissioners Perring and Vachet are planning to attend the Eliminating Racial Disparity Disproportionality (ERDD) meeting on June 11, 2025.

Commissioners Vachet and Yost are planning to attend the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Prevention and Awareness Subcommittee meeting on June 12, 2025.

Commissioner Johnson is planning to attend the CAST Policy meeting on June 18, 2025.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Yost announced that she will be attending the upcoming Orange County funding meeting later that evening.

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Commissioner Johnson shared an article about a settlement related to the "gladiator fights" incidents in Los Angeles Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall.

CLOSED SESSION

The executive session was convened from 11:04 a.m. – 11:24 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

Judy Johnson

Judy Johnson, Chair